

## Statement from Mathieu Labrèche, Director, Media Strategy, the Canadian Bankers Association

“While we cannot comment on the specifics of this case, with the increased use of social media websites, social networking sites and dating sites, so-called “romance scams” have become more common both in Canada and around the world. Unfortunately, seniors are frequently targets of fraud scams.

If a bank customer thinks she or he may be a victim of a romance scam, or any other kind of fraud, it is important that they contact police immediately. Bank staff are aware of fraud scams and are trained to ask probing questions if a customer makes an unusual transaction. However, as the owners of the account, the customer is responsible for any funds that she or he withdraws from their bank account. Ultimately, banks must strike an appropriate balance between helping to prevent and detect fraud, while also protecting the rights of their customers to access their money.

In collaboration with the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada, the Canadian Bankers Association runs a financial education program for seniors called “Your Money Seniors”. The seminar contains three modules including cash management, protecting against financial abuse and fraud prevention, including topics such as the ‘romance scam’. The sessions are delivered by volunteers from the banking sector and are offered free of charge. Since the program began in 2014, we have delivered almost 150 seminars to approximately 5,000 seniors across Canada. Learn more about the Your Money Seniors program: <https://www.cba.ca/about-your-money-seniors>”

Below are CBA’s responses to your follow up questions.

1) Are there standard policies and procedures for the banks in cases such as this, are they set at each institution?

Each bank has its own policies and procedures in place for protecting and detecting fraud, however banks in Canada work together closely to share best practices on how to protect customers from unauthorized activity.

2) Are there any legal requirements for banks to protect clients from fraud?

Banks in Canada offer a variety of consumer protection programs if unauthorized activity takes place on a customer’s account. They also invest in fraud detection programs, educate their employees in recognizing signs of fraud and are committed to detecting and preventing fraud at multiple layers.

3) What is the CBA's position on the banks introducing more proactive measures to protect seniors from scams of this nature - for instance, a mandatory checklist that would detect possible fraud?

Customer awareness and education goes a long way in helping to prevent and protect against financial fraud. The CBA runs a financial education program for seniors called “Your Money Seniors”, in addition to the popular “Your Money Students” program. The seniors seminar contains three modules including cash management, protecting against financial abuse and fraud prevention. The sessions are delivered by volunteers from the banking sector and are offered free of charge. Since the program began in 2014, we have delivered almost 150 seminars to approximately 5,000 seniors across Canada.